



RENDCOMB COLLEGE

NURSERY • JUNIOR • SENIOR

Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures (ISI: 10a)

Monitoring:

Deputy Head (Pastoral) and JS Head

Reviewed:

August 2024

Next Review:

August 2025

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

At Rendcomb College, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, unkindness, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed; but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Rendcomb prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Ours is a diverse community, with pupils from a variety of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Some pupils require additional support and help. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the College in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that College and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the College.

Any kind of bullying is unacceptable and includes bullying behaviour off College premises of which the College is made aware of, such as on school or public transport, school trips, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre; as well as cyber-bullying through social media.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on. The school will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed. Where necessary, we will apply the sanctions described in our Behaviour Policy for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

This policy was written in response to and with regard for the initial Department for Education's guidance 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (October 2014) and its updated version July 2017 and may be reviewed in light of any new government guidance issued from time to time.

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- to prevent bullying and maintain and promote a positive environment where all pupils can thrive and be happy
- to support the bully and the victim with the aim of deterring bullying behaviour
- to foster positive attitudes towards individuals who are disabled and towards religious, cultural or ethnic groups in and outside the College community.
- to comply with the College's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, cultural or sub-culture, gender, sexual orientation, LGBT+, special educational needs or

disabilities, mental ill health, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences, such as Gypsy, Roma or Traveller children.

It could involve physical (including sexual) intimidation, verbal, cyber (including chat room, email, e-photos and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It could also be because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and cause intimidation.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause both physical and serious lasting psychological damage and even suicide. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical. Harassment, threatening behaviour and damage to another's property, as well as malicious electronic communications, which intend to cause distress or conveys an indecent message, may be a criminal offence (and also a civil wrong) which has repercussions outside the College. We always treat bullying very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the College's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles. Working with guidance from Local Authorities and within the parameters of KCSIE guidance, the College will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify external agencies such as the police where they have suspicions or concerns that a criminal offence has or will be committed or bullying behaviour poses a serious threat to members of the College community or the general public. This decision will sit with the Headmaster and Deputy Head (Pastoral)/DSL.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

In the Junior School, the definition of bullying is often explained through the adoption of the NSPCC's definition: Pupils are taught that bullying is unacceptable and that, together as a school, we aim to STOP it happening. Bullying is defined as an action which knowingly caused upset and has been made Several Times On Purpose.

Signs of bullying

There are many different signs that could indicate that another pupil is being bullied. However, if a pupil changes their behaviour this may indicate that they are being bullied and anyone who notices this in a pupil are encouraged to report it to a member of staff. Examples of changes in behaviour include:

- Unwillingness to return to College
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

Preventative measures

- All pupils are encouraged to tell a member of the teaching or pastoral staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place.
- This policy is actively and frequently promoted and supported through assemblies, Tutor time and the PSHEE curriculum in the Junior and Senior School so that all pupils understand the College's policy on behaviour.
- A list of all the possible people that could be informed is shown in Section 5 titled 'Worried' and on posters in every boarding house.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated by the member of staff who was informed or the House staff. In serious cases the Assistant Head or Deputy Head may be involved immediately.
- Senior School Head Boys/Girls and their team of prefects are provided with training which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.
- All initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain anxiety or humiliation, are banned.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside College hours, on College visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the College, involving our pupils.

Cyberbullying: definition

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff, the Headmaster can authorise a staff member to examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If an electronic device has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must refer this to the Headmaster or DSL, who will give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child, an extreme pornographic image, a nude or semi-nude image should not be viewed or deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

The generally accepted definition of cyberbullying is defined by the web site: <http://www.cyberbullying.org/>. They defined it as follows:

"willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices."

This definition was developed because it is simple, concise, and reasonably comprehensive and it captures the most important elements. These elements include the following:

- *Willful*: The behaviour has to be deliberate, not accidental.
- *Repeated*: Bullying reflects a pattern of behaviour, not just one isolated incident.
- *Harm*: The target must perceive that harm was inflicted or there was clear intent to engage in bullying behaviour.
- *Computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices*: This, of course, is what differentiates cyberbullying from traditional bullying.

Their definition is clarified further and made more relevant to pupils' everyday experiences by further stating:

“cyberbullying is when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person online or repeatedly picks on another person through e-mail or text message or when someone posts something online about another person that they don't like.”

The emphasis in particular is on the repetitive nature of the harmful behaviour, a single instance of harassment does not constitute bullying. Although this one posted comment/photo on the internet could lead to further comments by others hence resulting in recurring humiliation and shame and, therefore, lead to cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying: preventative measures

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Rendcomb College:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its policy for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal College email address.
- Adheres to many of the Government guidelines regarding E-teaching and the internet.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in IT & PSHEE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from “buddy” lists.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Does not permit mobile phones to be used in public areas of the College, or where they may cause annoyance to others and only in classrooms with staff permission.
- Does not allow the use of cameras on mobile phones in washing and changing areas, or in the bedrooms of boarding houses.

Further details, including the College's policy on the use of the internet, are given in our ICT Acceptable Use Policy on pupils' use of ICT, mobile phones and other electronic devices.

Intervention

Bullying will always be dealt with severely and in accordance with the College's Behaviour Policy. Any sanctions imposed will reflect the seriousness of the bullying incident. If bullying behaviour persists and/or is particularly severe, the bully may be excluded or suspended from College.

Where sanctions are applied, they will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably taking into account any disabilities or special educational needs a pupil may have or the needs of vulnerable pupils.

Staff should always consider the motive behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. If staff have any reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm the College's Safeguarding of Children (Child Protection) Policy should be followed. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, the College will consider whether external services need to be informed to support the pupil and help tackle underlying issues, for example, which may have contributed to bullying behaviour.

Procedures for dealing with reported bullying

Parents

If parents know or suspect that their child or another pupil is being bullied, they should contact the College without delay. All concerns about bullying will be taken seriously.

If the pupil being bullied or their parents are not satisfied with the action taken by the College under this procedure, they can make a formal complaint by following the College's Complaints Procedure.

Members of staff

All staff should be alert to the signs of bullying. If a pupil or parent reports a case of bullying to a member of staff, or staff suspect bullying is taking place, they should follow the procedure below. There is also more detail and assistance in the College's Safeguarding policy.

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- Reported incidents of bullying will be recorded in writing by the bullied pupil, the alleged bully and any witnesses. Staff will also make notes of any interviews they have with the pupils involved. These should be passed to Houseparents and Deputy Head (Pastoral) for storing of records and to ensure appropriate outcomes.
- Our reaction to reported incidents will depend very much upon the detailed circumstances. Students need to have confidence that any communication with staff with regard to bullying will be dealt with in regard to sensitivity and seriousness. Appropriate staff intervention, we are confident, can improve the situation quickly and will not make the situation worse.
- Contact with parents of the bullied pupil and of the bully at the end of an investigation will very much depend on the circumstances and conclusion. This contact may be from the House parents, Form Tutor (Junior School), Head of Key Stage, Assistant Head (Junior School), Deputy Head (Pastoral), Head of JS or the Head of College.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- Should any serious incident of bullying be reported, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or Head JS will be brought in at an early stage to investigate and the bully *may receive immediate suspension*

or worse depending on the severity of the bullying. The consequences of any repetition - *further suspension or the removal of the bully from College* - will be made clear to the bully and to his or her parents.

- If the bullying is particularly serious, or the tackling bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Headmaster, Deputy Head (Pastoral)/DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.
- In very serious or persistent cases, and only after the Head has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services.

Promotion and review

This policy is reviewed and updated annually. Every complaint or report of bullying will be recorded. Records are monitored and reviewed to identify any patterns in bullying behaviour so that appropriate steps can be taken to address such behaviour.

The policy is promoted and supported through assemblies, PSHEE, Tutor time, EDI committee and school events so that all pupils understand the College's policy on behaviour. This includes using Assemblies to make pupils aware of anti-bullying week, safer-internet day and other national themes but also bringing in external agencies, such as the Police, to present on sexting, online behaviour, peer-on-peer abuse and other topics to ensure pupils understand the importance of appropriate behaviour. These are built into the PSHEE programme. All staff are made aware of this policy through training so that the principles of this policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known and action is defined to resolve and prevent problems.